

# Urban Ecology Research & Learning Alliance

***The National Capital Region (NCR) formed the Urban Ecology Learning Alliance (UELA) network in 2002, linking institutions and NCR parks to increase access to research expertise, facilities, and students of all ages. The UELA network will be the primary outreach of the NCR Natural Resources Challenge, especially the Inventory and Monitoring Program. UELA network will play a crucial role in the delivery of scientific information to both the public and resource managers.***

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University scientists search for subsurface dwelling crustaceans called amphipods in Rock Creek Park.

## Science and Education Program Development

The UELA network is closely aligned with the Chesapeake Watershed Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit and NCR Center for Urban Ecology (CUE). With these partners, the UELA network will work to achieve the following goals:

- Identify research questions that provide new information for the management of natural and cultural resources within the urban environment
- Work with researchers to develop park questions into fundable studies
- Seek and pursue federal and non-federal funding for research and education in urban ecology
- Develop educational curricula to present the values of and threats to resources in urban systems.

An Education Coordinator will join the UELA this summer and begin developing education outreach programs for NCR's Natural Resource Challenge.

## Internships Support Natural and Cultural Resource Sciences

This summer, interns with UELA gain exceptional park experiences in an urban or rural setting, and both Natural



The CUE provides lab facilities for researchers.

and Cultural Resource Programs will benefit from the interns' efforts. This year's interns include undergraduates collecting and managing data for NCR Water Resources and Inventory & Monitoring programs, an intern providing curatorial support for natural and cultural resources in the NCR Museum Resource Center, a visiting scholar from China working in the Cultural Landscapes Program, and

an intern assisting a UELA-partner, the Alice Ferguson Foundation, with the Bridging the Watershed program that provides research and education opportunities focused on the Potomac River ecosystem.

## Sabbatical in the Parks

The UELA also will facilitate research opportunities through the Sabbatical in the Parks Program. This summer, a researcher from the University of Minnesota will visit several NCR parks to study non-native *Miscanthus*. *Miscanthus* is a large exotic grass that threatens native species in Rock Creek Park, Prince William Forest Park, and George Washington Memorial Parkway. NCR parks are one part of this international sabbatical study of *Miscanthus* spp.



A variety of existing facilities throughout NCR parks are available for use by researchers and students.